

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 102(a) as being anticipated by Kono et al. (JP02000047130A).

Claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kono et al. in view of Norris.

However, the publication date of JP02000047130 is February 18, 2000. The priority date of the present application is December 28, 1999, which date is prior to the publication date of Kono et al. In order to perfect our priority claim, we now provide an English translation of our priority document along with a declaration by the translator. We ask that the rejection of claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 17 be withdrawn.

For the same reason as described above, Kono et al. cannot be combined with Norris. Therefore, claims 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18 should not be rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a).

In view of the foregoing, the claims are now believed to be in form for allowance, and such action is hereby solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

Pillsbury Winthrop, LLP

By:  39328

for

Glenn J. Perry

Reg. No. 28,458

Telephone: (703) 905-2161

Direct Fax: (703) 738-2277

Pillsbury Winthrop, LLP

SHINOHARA. -- Appln. No. 09/749,741

1600 Tysons Boulevard
McLean, Virginia 22102
Switchboard: (703) 905-2000
Office fax: 703-905-2500